

Almost One Million New York Children Will Get Health Care Coverage from SCHIP Was hington, D.C.

– U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover) today voted to pass the final version of bipartisan legislation to provide health care to almost one million New York children in middle-income families. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act was approved by a vote of 290-135. Passage by the House today sent the bill to President Obama. The President has stated that he will sign the bill later today. Today's expansion of SCHIP will reduce the number of uninsured New York children by 66 percent.

"Every child has a right to good medical care," said Congressman Hall. "Providing paid for preventative care makes much more economic sense than forcing families to take their children to the costly emergency room for primary care. The signing of SCHIP into law moves us closer to providing every child in America with affordable, high-quality health care."

SCHIP was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families that earn too little to afford health insurance for their children themselves but too much to qualify for Medicaid. This bill will give New York and other states the resources and incentives necessary to reach and cover millions of uninsured children who are currently eligible for, but not enrolled in, SCHIP and Medicaid.

Today's bipartisan bill reauthorizes the SCHIP through fiscal year 2013. It preserves the coverage for all 7.1 million children currently covered by SCHIP, including preserving the coverage of 651,853 children in New York. It also provides coverage for 4.1 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for, but not enrolled in, SCHIP and Medicaid, including 261,000 more New York children.

"I have been fighting for this health care for children since my first day in Congress," said Congressman Hall. "After voting to pass children's health insurance five times in the past two years only to have it vetoed by President Bush, I am thrilled that we now have a President who will work with Congress to provide much needed health care to 11 million children. This is the change that American children deserve."

Today's bipartisan legislation has a broad range of support. It has been endorsed by dozens of organizations, representing millions of Americans – ranging from business groups such as the National Federation of Independent Businesses and Business Roundtable to the American Hospital Association to such groups as AARP and Families USA.

The bill is fully paid for by raising the tobacco tax by 62 cents. Raising the tobacco tax also promotes children's health by discouraging children from smoking. According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a 62-cent increase in the tobacco tax means that nearly 1.9 million fewer children will take up smoking.

"Covering more eligible children is not only the right thing to do – it makes good economic sense for taxpayers who will not foot the bill for costlier problems down the road," pointed out Congressman Hall. "In addition, a healthy child is better prepared for learning and success."

Hall Votes to Provide Health Care for 11 Million Children

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